
E-Governance in India – A Conceptual Analysis

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Abstract:

One cannot deny the role of e-governance in transforming 'India' into 'Digital India'. Effective use of information and communication technology by the government in its sectors to provide transparent and quick services to citizens is a remarkable attempt. The fruits are visible and gradually being acceptable by the society.

The present paper endeavours to explain the role of e-governance in digital transformation by appraising its various forms including G2G, G2B, G2E and G2C. The first phase analyzed the journey of e-governance in India and its steady development. The concept was explored with an attempt to review its role in making digital India. The various components of e-governance were also evaluated in brief. The study has analyzed its barriers which need time to get removed in Indian context. Overall, e-governance with its supporting moulded phase, m-governance, is gaining confidence and acceptability in Indian society.

Keywords: E-government, digital India, transparency, accountability, components, m-governance.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Journey of e-governance

E-governance in India is a visible concept today. It has unmasked its elementary form and has crossed many milestones within stipulated timeframe. The first step was taken in 1970 with the establishment of the Department of Electronics, followed by establishment of NIC, National Informatics Centre in 1977. NIC was founded to implement e-governance in India which was a dream at its initial stage. This dream came true in a very steady pace with the installation of computer systems in Government organizations to undertake various planned and non-planned schemes. Consequently, all the Government departments had taken an important step by computerizing their manual tasks. Later in 1987, NICNET, a national satellite based network was launched followed by DISNIC.

It took more than a decade to nourish the concept of e-governance. Milestones can be counted in the history of e-governance in India with the establishment of the Ministry of Information Technology in 2000 and launch of NeGP, National e-Governance Plan in 2006. The Plan resulted in initiation of 27 Mission Mode Projects in various sectors which has raised to 44 MMPs at present, comprising 13 as Central MMPs, 17 as State MMPs and 14 as Integrated MMPs.

2.0 Concept of e-governance

One cannot deny the power of letter 'e' in today's state of affairs. In the world of e-mails, e-commerce, e-technology, e-governance, e-kranti, e-payment, e-hospital, e-court, e-district and many more; the letter 'e' which stands for 'electronic' has changed the whole scenario. Governance, all of the processes of governing, has many facets. It not only deals with establishment of policies and its continual monitoring but also provides a mechanism to access the public services. It bestows the tasks of safeguarding the legal rights of the citizens of the country.

Governance has been derived from the Latin word ‘gubernare’ and Greek word ‘kubernaein’, which basically implies a manner of directing and controlling a group, thereby providing avenues to leaders in various spheres attracted political leadership as well. Its traditional form has associated the word with government and it has been used interchangeably in number of cases also. However, in practice the concept observes working on society as well as public and private sectors. It may be associated with control and dominance on the one side and on the other can be referred to structures and processes for its group members. It has been implemented worldwide to ensure transparency, accountability, equity, openness and empowerment.

When the Government system utilizes Information and Communication Technology to impart services to its citizen, the Governance becomes e-governance. Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, former President, associated transparent smart e-Governance with seamless access, secure and authentic flow of information crossing the interdepartmental barrier and providing a fair and unbiased service to the citizen. The concept enables making effective use of information technology in Government system with observable results contributing cost reduction or achieving goals in more effective manner. E-governance is infact an attempt to reform government through technology. The aim is to reduce fields by simplifying forms, providing online mode for repositories and tracking, mandating EDI etc.

UNESCO defines governance as exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country’s affairs, including citizens’ articulation of their interests and exercise of their legal rights and obligations, while E-Governance may be understood as the performance of this governance via the electronic medium in order to facilitate an efficient, speedy and transparent process of disseminating information to the public, and other agencies, and for performing government administration activities.

Appearing synonymous to e-government, the term has wider applicability and scope. E-Government can be associated with a system while e-governance with functionability acting as two way communicationmodus operandi.E-governance provides a number of benefits including cost reduction resulting increase in revenue, ensure accountability, transparency, efficiency and citizen participation.E-governance provides four ways (termed as its models) to interact which include the following:

- (1) Government to Government (called as G2G)
- (2) Government to Business (called as G2B)
- (3) Government to Employees (called as G2E)
- (4) Government to Citizens (called as G2C)

These four forms provide a wider scope to this concept and enable it to progress in modern e-preferred society. Amongst, all these, G2C have got greater importance with the want to achieve transparency and accountability. However, it doesn’t state in lessening the importance of role of G2B which also aims at reduction of red-tapism and achieving transparency for business sectors. G2G and G2E can be linked with internal functionability of the system.

3.0 ROLE OF E-GOVERNANCE IN DIGITAL INDIA

In July, 2015, the Government of India launched a campaign to ensure providing online services to citizens with the aim to transform India into Digital India. The programme has been designed to implement in phasewise manner with vision to provide digital empowerment, digital infrastructure and on demand governance. The programme has provided nine pillars including e-kranti, broadband highways, Public Internet Access Programme, universal access to mobile, university information, electronics manufacturing, Information Technology for jobs, early harvest programmes and e-

governance. The stakeholders of Digital India are user organizations (including Government & autonomous departments and public sectors) and digital contributors. It has manifold advantages for the citizens as well as service providers. Likewise it enables to create employability opportunities and is making significant contribution to get transformed into Digital India.

4.0 COMPONENTS OF E-GOVERNANCE:

E-governance can be regarded as continuous endeavour and has showed significance in various spheres. It involves many programmes and initiatives taken by the Government for the benefit of the society. Most of the programmes has at present, transformed the country by making significant change in the Government form also. The various components may be enlisted as follows:

C o m p o n e n t s	D e s c r i p t i o n
B h a v i s h y a	Online Pension Sanction and Payment Tracking System implemented by the Department of Pension & Pensioners Welfare, Government of India.
DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer)	DBT enables transfer of subsidies directly to the beneficiaries through their bank account with the intention to bring transparency, efficiency and accountability.
e - c o u r t	Portal to provide online services for case filing, case registration, generate cause list, case Management System etc.
e - d i s t r i c t s	Portal to deliver various e-gov services to districts.
e - h o s p i t a l	Portals to provide online registration, fixing appointments, accessing reports, payment gateway and blood availability status check facilities.
e - k r a n t i	e-Kranti framework, provides electronic delivery of services through a portfolio of mission mode projects and to ensure a government wide transformation by providing services to users.
e - m a n d i	Portal to procure of agricultural products especially by small and marginal farmers.
e - t o u r i s t v i s a	Portal for tourists to apply online visa and obtain e-Tourist Visa online.
GeM (Government e-Market)	GeM Place hosted by DGS&D to facilitate procurement of goods and services to Government departments.
JeevanPramaan (Digital Life Certificate)	Biometric enabled digital service for pensioners enabling them to get JeevanPramaan without being physically present.
m y G o v	Portal to establish link between Government and Citizens to achieve good governance.
NSP (National Scholarships Portal)	NSP to disburse scholarship to beneficiaries, comprising more than 75 effective schemes.
P a s s p o r t S e v a	Portal to provide online facility for obtaining fresh & renewal passport services
PFMS (Public Financial Management System)	PFMS is a platform for e-payment of subsidy under Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to both Aadhar based & Non- Aadhar based bank accounts through NPCI.
V i k a s p e d i a	Portal for information dissemination and access information in various languages about various fields like health, education agriculture, social welfare etc.

5.0 BARRIERS IN E-GOVERNANCE

E-governance is in development stage and country is experiencing transformation. However, there are still a number of barriers which need to be crossed. It act as part of the process of its implementation especially in the country of mixed economy like India. The various barriers can be listed as follows:

a) Initial setup cost – Cost Benefit analysis

One of the most important barriers which cannot be neglected is the cost of providing services, especially the initial setup cost. Many times, it becomes hard to make people believe why so much public money needs to be invested in new functionability. In certain cases, initial cost benefit analysis is unpredictable and complicated exercise.

b) Public awareness and faith in new system

Not all in India are considered as IT savvy. Indians constitute a part of citizens who are not fortunate to make use of online services due to lack of resources, awareness, knowledge, guidance, reliance or other factors. More awareness is required and faith is yet to be developed.

c) Sense of security and privacy concerns

The most significant factor in case of online payment is security of money accounts and safety of privacy data. Incidents of online frauds, security thefts, third party access makes it difficult to rely on online services.

d) Availability of skill resources

No doubt, upkeep and maintenance of e-governance is a job of skilled personnel. It requires technicians, programmers, experts, administrators for its periodical maintenance and upkeep. It may be considered as a challenge for education society to analyze and fulfil the demand.

e) Adaptability with technological changes

Not only India but also other countries in the world have observed many technological changes affecting industries, business, society, citizens and government systems. Key to exist is to accept these changes and its early adaptability. Relying fully on modern technology require government systems to adapt these changes at an early stage, otherwise may result in failure.

f) Public Trust

Public is still reluctant to use online services due to its instant dynamic form. Many times, before it develops a sense of faith on public, incidents or cautionary measures to prevent fraudulent transactions shakes their trust.

g) Acceptability to change

Change, in any form, is not easily acceptable by all. Infact, most of us don't like many changes especially when the things are going under control. It is very hard to adopt dynamic changes and e-governance acts as changing the form of services right from elementary level. Acceptability to change will certain take some more time.

6.0 CONCLUSION

E-governance itself is observing composite phase of m-governance (mobile governance). Infact, m-governance is providing e-governance a handy way to serve its purpose. India has accepted m-governance much easily as compared to it is accepting e-governance. However, the same may be considered as synthesis mechanism to provide e-services to the public. The fruitful practice to provide instant and faster results through e-governance is making it more effective day-by-day and socially acceptable. The barriers are getting removed with pace of time.

Growing use of smartphones may be considered as one of the remarkable steps in this regard. Use of social apps like twitter, whatsapp, facebook etc. have in some way taught people to make use of smart technology. Gradually people are making effective use of smartphones for various services. People started realizing importance of making online payment through computers, smartphones as its saves a lot of time, efforts as well as cost. Therefore it has made it comparative easier for the society to accept governance in its electronic forms and understand its advantages.

E-governance may face many changes in near future due to changes in technology, requirements or other factors. PFMS, GeM, Bhavishya, EIS in Government sectors require proper training to the employees and in later phase may observe modifications. However, reliance on technology can never be reverted, making it hard for the next generations to live with digital technology. Undoubtedly, e-governance is taking us all to the new world of digital society to make our life more comfortable.

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